

Parsons Nursery, Seed Extractor Building
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-K

HABS
WVA
47-PARS.V,
1K-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABBS
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS No. WV-237-K
PARSONS NURSERY, Seed Extractor Building

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614260.4327520

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Department of Natural Resources
State of West Virginia

Last Use: Agricultural chemical storage, first floor;
second floor vacant

Significance: The seed extractor building was built in 1934
with Forest Service general operating funds,
as a part of the Parsons Nursery of the
Monongahela National Forest. In it, pine
and spruce cones were heated to loosen seeds
from the cones, the cones were tumbled to
extract the seeds, and the seeds were milled
to remove the casing from the seeds. The
building and its seed extracting equipment
was used by the Forest Service and the State
of West Virginia Department of Natural
Resources until 1985. Since then, the
building has been used for storage by the
Tucker County and West Virginia University
Cooperative Extension agent. This building
is a rare example of a nursery facility
housing its original equipment. For overview
of Parsons Nursery, see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1934, derived from a photograph dated 1934 that shows the seed extractor installed in this building (see WV-237-K-5).
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The seed extractor building was constructed for Monongahela National Forest by contract labor, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: The furnace was changed from a coal-fired furnace to one that used gas in the 1950's. To be demolished 1990.

B. Historical Context:

The seed extractor building was constructed in 1934. It housed an important part of the nursery process which relied upon locally collected seeds for propagation of seedlings. Locally collected seeds were used because they had a higher rate of germination than seeds that were not fresh or that came from a different climate, altitude, and soil type. Generally, seedlings grown at the Parsons Nursery would be sent to the same habitat where the seeds had been collected; Allegheny National Forest seeds would go back to Allegheny National Forest as seedlings. Therefore, Parsons Nursery dried and cleaned seeds for the Forests and sites it serviced with seedlings. Under the direction of the State of West Virginia, the Parsons Nursery also sold seeds to other states, as the Parsons area was such a good source for seed collection, according to Alvin Allison.

Cones dried in the cone drying shed were transferred to trays on the upper floor of the seed extractor building. These three sets of tray racks were housed in an enclosed chamber, a kiln, above a furnace (see WV-237-K-3). The heat from the furnace loosened the seeds from the cones. After the cones were dried, they were placed in the seed separator which tumbled the cones to remove the seeds (see WV-237-K-2 and WV-237-K-4, WV-237-K-5). Finally, the seeds were placed in a machine that removed the husk, called "wings", of the seeds

(see WV-237-K-6). Clean seed was stored in glass jars until early February.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The seed extractor building is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, shingle style. This building uses native materials available in Monongahela National Forest, such as chestnut sheathing boards and joists and it follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints used under sawn cedar shingle siding.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is structurally sound and cared for. There are three small leaks in the roof. An east, first floor window has been covered.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 30'-3" x 18'-2". The north and south elevation have three bays with centered doors; the side elevations each have two bays.
2. Foundation: 8" cement block foundation with the north wall continuing east and west as a 40" long retaining wall.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width cedar cut shingles applied in courses of 5" exposure. There are 4-1/2" plain yellow painted corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 16'-8"; at the peak is 22'-2".
4. Structural system: The wood frame walls are "2x4's", on 17" centers. Sill and wall plates are doubled "2x4's". The exterior walls and roof are covered in 1" thick diagonal random width chestnut sheathing boards--a typical West Virginia mountain framing system. The rafters, floor joists, and upper floor wall ties are "2x6's" on 24" centers with a "1x6" ridge board. Studs, joists, and rafters are pine. There is a "4x4" that runs from the head of the north, upper floor doorway to the wall of the cone drying shed.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The stairs or stoop to the upper floor doorways was demolished in the flood of November, 1985.

6. Chimneys: There are three round, hooded vent stacks for drying system on east side of roof. The exterior chimney is a 21" x 16" wire-cut red brick exterior stack with a two-row, corbelled cap with galvanized, stepped roof flashing.

7. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: The south, lower floor doorway has plain, 4" board architrave with butt-jointed head. There is no door sill. The doors are exterior-mounted sliding doors each made of two pine doors each with four lights and two molded panels. The door heights are 7'-2". The doors are joined by two sets of hinges. The north, upper floor doorway has plain, 4-1/2" board architrave with butt-jointed head. Doorway height is 6'-8". The double, pine, front doors have five molded panels. There is a 3/4" x 1" stop on the east door. Doorways and doors are painted yellow.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Window frames are plain, 4" butt-jointed jambs. There are metal drip caps and 1-1/2" window sills. There are two sizes of windows. The windows on the north elevation, lower floor are single pane, fixed sash, 2'-9" x 2'-4". All other windows are 1/1, double hung, 4'-6" x 2'-10". Window sash and trim are painted yellow. There have been no shutters.
8. Roof: The gable roof has asbestos shingles, a replacement of the original sawn cedar shingles. It has exposed rafter ends that have a 1" x 1" notch cut from the bottom rafter edge. There is no fascia. The rectangular wooden gutters survive (see WV-237-J-3). On each gable end the "2x8" rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extends just past the rake boards. The rake board ends are clipped to meet the fascia. The gable end overhang is 8", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 12". Cornice, exposed rafter ends, and gutters are painted yellow.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The rectangular building has two floors. The lower floor has two rooms, the east room has a furnace and west room has a seed separator and seed cleaner. The upper floor is one space with a kiln area enclosed on the east, above the furnace. Access to the upper flue is by a drop-down ladder and 2' wide catwalk.

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2. Stairways: There is an open stringer, drop-down ladder to the attic catwalk that accesses to the furnace flue.
3. Flooring: The lower floor is unpainted concrete. The upper floor is unfinished pine, 2-1/4" on a "1x6" chestnut tongue-and-groove subfloor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All interiors are exposed framing, except the wall dividing the lower level. It is sheathed in horizontal poplar "1x8's" tongue-and-groove on the west side; beaded, pine 2-1/2" tongue-and-groove horizontal sheathing on the east side of the wall. Silver-painted metal sheeting covers the interior north, west and south walls on the upper floor to a height of 4' beginning at the north doorway and continuing 3'-10" beyond the west window on the south side. The lower floor ceiling height is 7'-3" to the bottom of the joists; the upper floor ceiling height is 8'-0" to the bottom of the wall ties.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doors: There are no interior jambs to the exterior doorways. On the lower floor, the south door into the furnace room is missing; the north door is pine board-and-batten. Each doorway is 6'-6" tall.
 - b. Windows: The north, single pane windows have no jambs or sills. All other windows have 4-1/2" jambs and heads, butt-jointed and extending 1/2"; a plain, 1" sill; and 3-1/2" under sill board. The sash is pine. Window trim and sash is unpainted.
6. Decorative features and trim: On the upper floor, the drying kiln is a box 13'-5" x 6'-7", 8'-0" tall. It has three, hinged doors that lift by rope pulls threaded through holes in the wall ties. The pine doors of the kiln are 5'-7" x 5'-2" with 3-1/2" top, bottom, side and middle stiles. The "panels" are made of diagonal 2-1/2" beaded pine sheathing. The inside of the doors is insulated with fiber board.
7. Hardware: The exterior, upper door hardware is plain iron with two, ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-plated, iron knob plate with bevelled edge on the west door. The lower floor exterior doors are jointed together with two, iron, ball-pinned hinges. The doors are hung with steel strap hangers. The sliding door closure is a 2-1/2" diameter, iron tube exterior door carriage. The cast iron pull has a heart-shaped top and bottom (see photograph WV-237-J-4). The windows have no

hardware.

8. Mechanical equipment: There never has been heat or plumbing. Greenfield electrical cable is surface mounted to ceramic ceiling fixtures with steel, flared reflectors.
 9. Original furnishings: There is one drying tray in the kiln. It is the same construction as the drying trays used in the cone drying shed. The original seed separator survives, (see WV-237-K-2 and WV-237-K-4, WV-237-K-5). The machine used to remove seed husks also survives, (see WV-237-K-6).
- D. Site: The building faces southeast, $147^{\circ}30'$. It survives on its original site, together with most of the original nursery structures. An 8" concrete block retaining wall on the north side of the building extends 5'-11" to the east and 11'-0" to the west.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

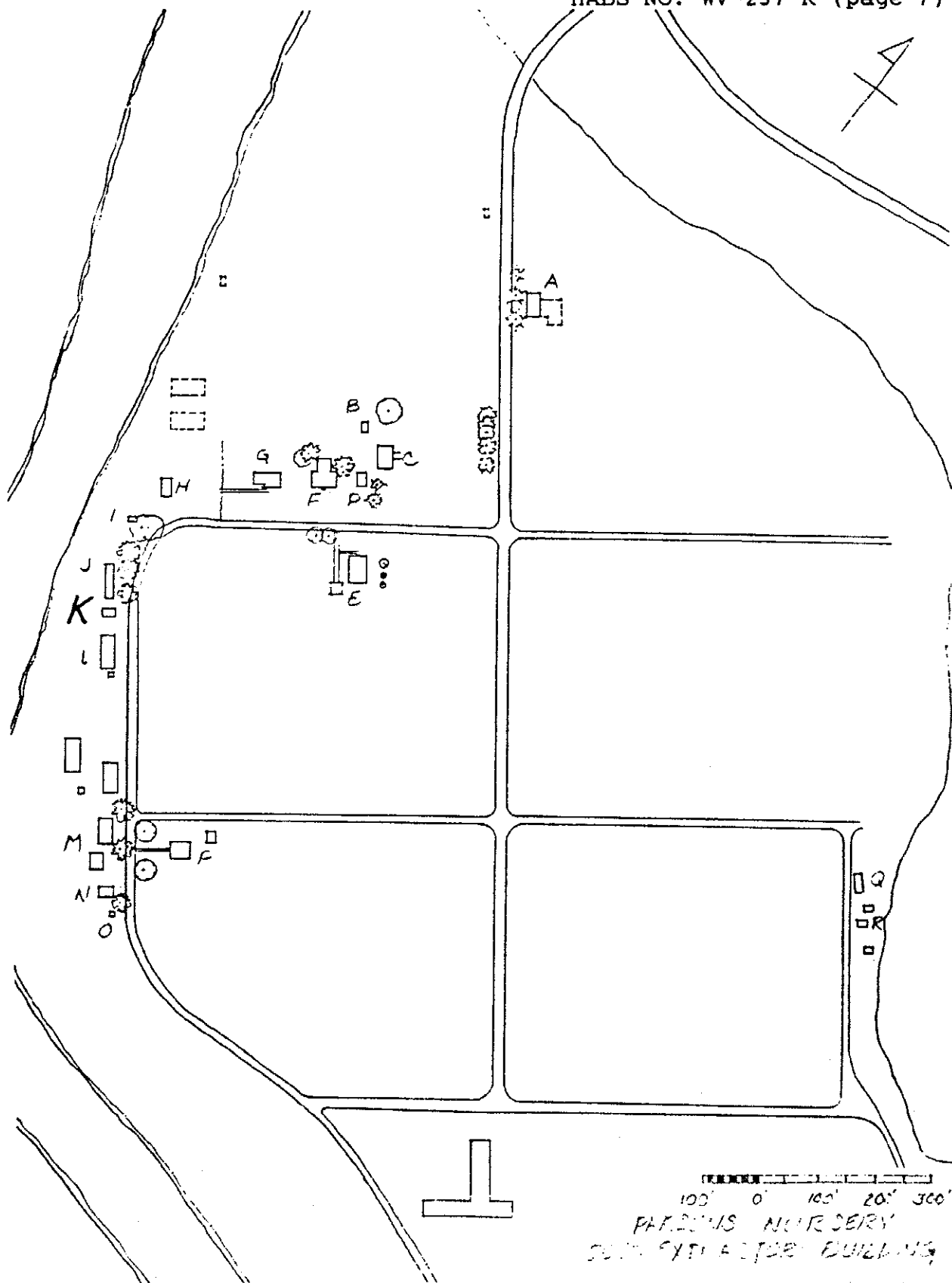
- A. Architectural drawings: None.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Al Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery manager, 1951-57; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-25-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

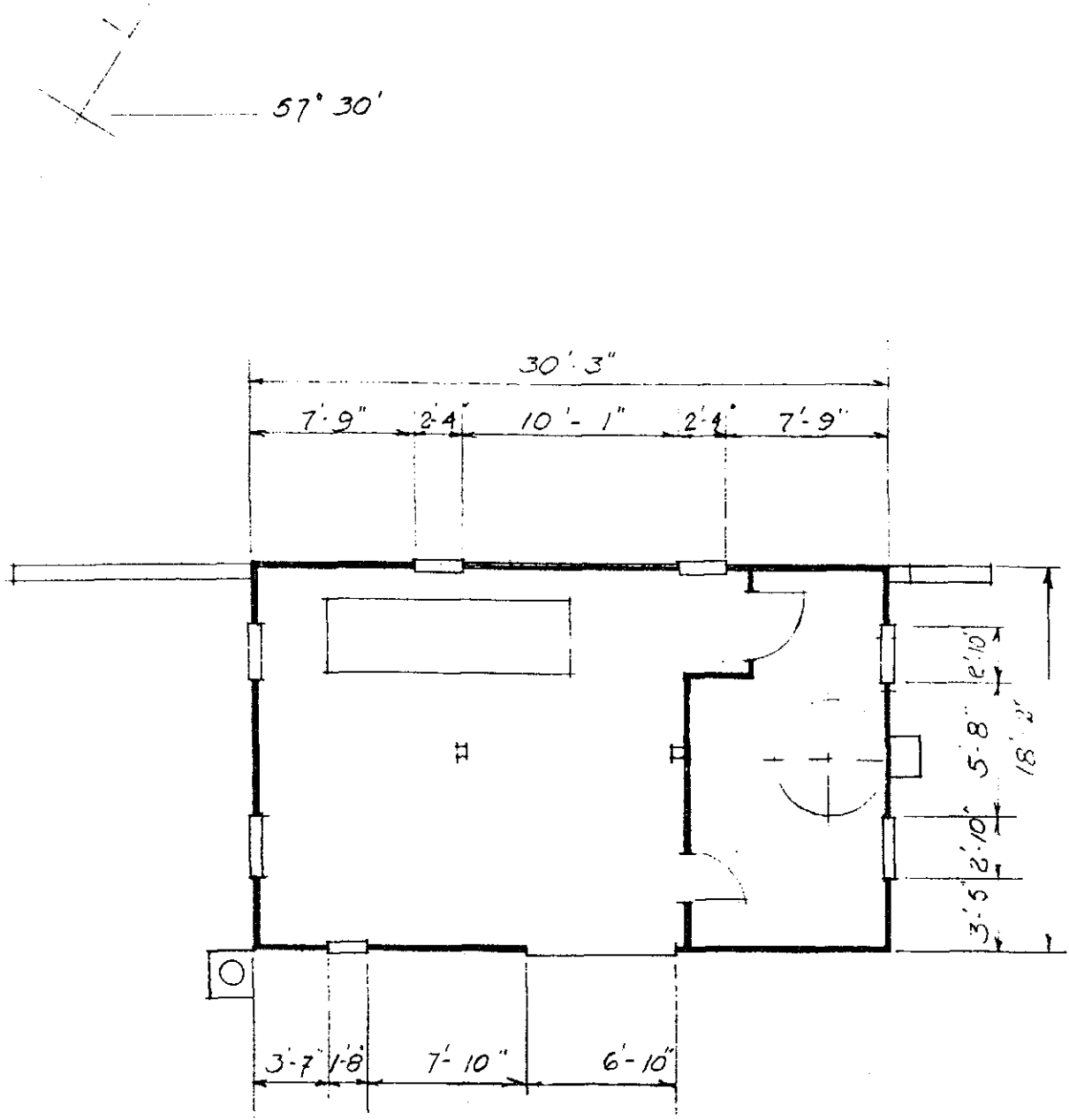
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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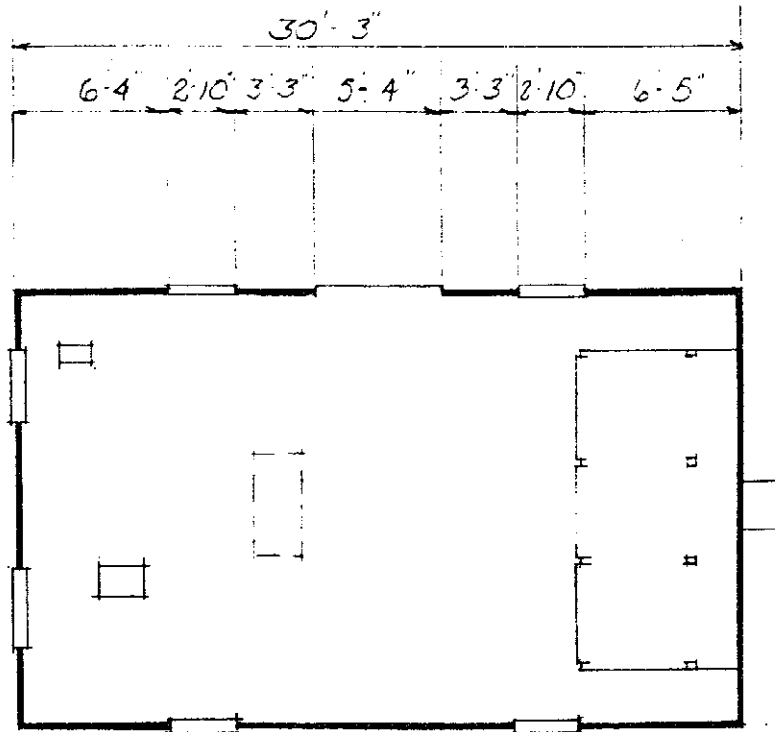
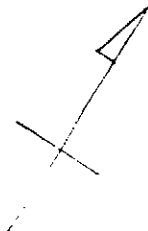


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SEED EXTRACTOR BUILDING - LOWER FLOOR
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SEED EXTRACTOR BUILDING-UPPER FLOOR
10-9-59